



U.S. Department
Of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

**Federal Transit
Administration**

Transportation Planning
Certification Review
of the
Metropolitan Transportation
Planning Process
for the
Hartford
and the
Connecticut Portion of the
Springfield MA-CT Transportation
Management Area
Capitol Region MPO

Final Report April 11, 2005

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Preface

The Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Processes are directed according to the requirements of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) issued planning regulations on October 28, 1993 setting federal requirements for the transportation planning process. These requirements are presented in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule. The Metropolitan Planning Regulations are closely tied with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Air Quality Conformity Regulations. TEA-21 essentially continues the programs and basic philosophies of ISTEA.

The metropolitan planning regulations require that the FHWA and FTA jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process conducted in each urbanized area or Transportation Management Area (TMA) with a population over 200,000 no less than every three years. This review includes meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Regulations and, in air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas, evaluation of the process to ensure conformity of plans and programs to the EPA Air Quality Conformity regulations. Upon completion of this review, FHWA and FTA will jointly Certify, Certify with Corrective Action or Decertify the Metropolitan Planning Process.

This is the fourth certification review of the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process for the Hartford and the Connecticut Portion of the Springfield MA-CT Transportation Management Area. The first review was conducted on March 7, 8 and 9, 1995, the second on May 5 and 27, 1998, and the third on July 11 and 12, 2001. This review was conducted on October 21, 2004 for the Midstate Regional Planning Agency, representing the Greater Middletown portion of the Hartford TMA, October 21, 2004 for the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency representing the Greater New Britain and Bristol portion of the Hartford TMA, and on October 20, 2004 for the Capitol Region Council of Governments. There was a half-day session on October 20, 2004, dedicated to a discussion of tasks that the three MPOs within the Hartford Urbanized Area are working on together. These include coordination of the overall planning process, freight planning, implementation of a TMS wide incident management program, development of a TMA wide Congestion Management System and a TMA wide Intelligent Transportation System Architecture.

The federal review team conducted a desk review of the major components of the transportation planning process and explored selected components of the planning process and major DOT initiatives in depth during the on-site review. This report identifies recommendations for consideration by the MPO for improvement and also highlights some of the positive practices of the MPO that can serve as examples to other states and planning organizations.

Certification Action:

The FTA and the FHWA have determined that the transportation planning process conducted by the Capitol Region Council of Governments, representing the Hartford portion of the Hartford TMA and the Connecticut portion of the Springfield MA-CT Transportation Management Area meets the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Rule, 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C and 49 CFR Part 613. The FHWA and the FTA are, therefore jointly certifying the transportation planning process.

Executive Summary

As a result of this certification review, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration find that the Capitol Region Council of Governments and its staff in cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Connecticut Transit, and the Greater Hartford Transit District are conducting a transportation planning process which produces valuable transportation planning products using the planning tools currently available.

The CRCOG has effective processes that encourage broad public participation, recognize the Transportation Plan (TP) as a useful planning tool, provide effective direction for developing Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects, consider a wide range of multimodal alternatives in their transportation studies, and adequately address transportation-related air quality issues. Through extensive effort the CRCOG staff has implemented sound planning practices in their region.

The CRCOG planning process is hereby certified subject to certain recommendations, which are noted below.

Summary of Recommendations –

The concept of cooperation among the planning regions within the Hartford TMA should continue to be explored and refined both in the area of sharing technical capability, as discussed earlier, and in the area of consistency of plans and programs for the entire TMA region.

The CRCOG should continue to participate with the planning agencies within the Hartford TMA to explore and further develop the precedent already set by the Congestion Management System (CMS), Incident Management and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) coordination activities. Other areas might include contracting or sharing of resources between the agencies for the completion of specific studies, development of a coordinated, TMA wide, transportation model and coordinated GIS system or the sharing of expertise relative to Environmental Justice (EJ), public participation, or other DOT planning requirements.

The next time the Public Participation Policy is updated discussion of the Administrative Adjustment process should be included and the STP-Urban Program process should be made a part of the Public Participation Policy and referenced in the TIP and Transportation Plan.

The CRCOG should continue to implement the activities already underway in the area of Environmental Justice and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) including the development and use of equity assessment methods, analysis to determine the spatial location of persons with LEP, and distribution of informational material in alternative languages.

Specific Items of Discussion at the On-site Review Meetings

In meeting the requirements of the Metropolitan Planning Regulations set forth in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule, Metropolitan Planning Organizations have the flexibility to focus their particular planning expertise on the needs that they define for their planning region through their planning process. The purpose of the on-site review meeting was to assess the technical capability of the MPO staff in meeting these planning needs, and their ability to involve the public who may be affected by transportation investments in the transportation decision-making process. In addition, the review team used these sessions to help assess the multi-modal nature of the MPO planning activities as well as their ability to respond to various DOT initiatives. As this TMA is comprised of three Metropolitan Planning Organizations, interregional cooperation and activities were a major focus of the certification review effort. The extent to which the public is involved in the transportation planning and decision making process was an overarching theme during this review.

Transit and Transit Oriented Design Planning

CRCOG has outlined four guiding principles for their transportation planning process, balanced transportation system, livable communities, cooperation and community involvement and implementation. Their transit planning and transit oriented development activities have maintained their commitment to these principles. The key players have included ConnDOT and Connecticut Transit, The Greater Hartford Transit District, other operators including Ridshare, CT DSS, MetroHartford Alliance, City of Hartford and other regions including New Britain area, Springfield MA area, and the Middletown Area. Coordination has occurred through The CRCOG Transportation Committee, CT transit Service review meetings, Bus Users Forum and committees of other regional organizations.

Major studies have included the Regional Transit Strategy adopted in 2001 which included the concept of advancing the development of BRT in four major corridors, the New Britain Bus Rapid Transit system, presently in design, with considerable TOD and

community integration work advanced by CRCOG, the Manchester BRT study, nearly complete, the Griffin BRT study, completed, the New Haven Hartford Springfield MA rail study, nearly complete, and the CBD Circulator study completed and now being implemented through service changes and coordination with the New Britain BRT project.

The Hartford New Britain BRT project gave CRCOG a significant opportunity to work with local communities along the route on land use issues, station area planning and station design. Through extensive involvement with local elected officials, municipal staff local citizens and business and neighborhood association members CRCOG presented concepts of transit oriented development, joint development and integration of the stations into the existing neighborhood structure.

Conclusion:

CRCOG has taken significant steps to integrate transit and transit oriented development planning into their transportation planning process.

Planning for Pedestrians, Bicycles and Livable Communities

Planning for Pedestrians, Bicycles and Livable Communities has been a major emphasis for CRCOG and has involved considerable activity.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

- CRCOG has formed a Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee including municipal planners and police officers, advocacy groups, State Department of Environmental Planning, and the State Department of Health
- Walkable Communities Workshops – CRCOG has conducted workshops to bring diverse groups together to examine local issues of pedestrian safety and walkability
- Pedestrian Planning – A Pedestrian Safety Review has been completed and a final plan is expected by the end of the year
- Implementation of the Bicycle Plan – Activities have included
 - Share The Road brochure prepared and distributed,
 - Bike Facility Design Workshop held on October 2001,
 - Planning for multi-use trail development

Livable Communities

The Region has developed a building livable communities newsletter titled, “Transportation Improvements as Tools for Livability”. The newsletter builds on groundwork from Walkable Communities Workshops and was distributed to

municipalities and other interested parties. The focus is on traffic calming, non-motorized modes of transportation and walkability.

Discussion with Transportation Committee & Others Regarding CRCOG's Planning Process

As part of the assessment of Public Participation in the Capitol region the review team included an agenda item to provide an opportunity for discussion with the CRCOG Transportation Committee and other interested individuals regarding their involvement in the CRCOG transportation planning process. The Transportation Committee is the primary means for public input and members are appointed by the CRCOG member communities, however, provision is also made for representation of other regional interests such as transit providers . The most notable of these is provision of a seat for a representative from the Environmental Justice Committee. Generally those who spoke were supportive of CRCOG efforts to involve the public in the planning process and there was a consensus that the opportunity for public input added significant value to the planning process. It was also noted that members are able to think regionally as they go through the process of assigning priorities for limited resources to the transportation needs of the region. Frustration was also expressed relative to the earmarking of transportation projects, which often occurs outside the transportation planning process and the time involved in bringing projects to fruition.

Conclusion:

CRCOG has a robust public participation process. They evaluate its effect and have made significant changes such as formation of an EJ Committee and including an EJ representative on the Transportation Committee.

Building Technical Capabilities

CRCOG uses a wide variety of technical tools to inform the planning process and provide information to local decision makers. These tools include a travel demand forecasting model with which they have integrated the FTA Summit software for use in completing transit user benefit analysis for the New Britain BRT project. They are also exploring other potential uses of the Summit software to apply the transit user benefit concept on other project to assist in assessing EJ impacts of project alternatives. In addition CRCOG has capability in GIS which is integrated into their travel model. The model is also used to present information relative to EJ, LEP, New Starts demographic information, CMS data and general information as needed on projects. Traffic engineering ability is also applied to local traffic forecasting and corridor study work

This technical capability is used to supplement and support the staff outreach and communication with the public and constituent groups within the planning region.

Additional technical tools employed in this outreach effort include digital photographs, presentation graphics/slides, a Website, and the use of e-mail to speed up communication and increase distribution.

Conclusion:

Because of its size and the skills of its staff CRCOG is able to maintain a high level of technical capability. This capability can be a resource to the smaller planning agencies that are now included as part of the Hartford TMA. Some precedent has been set for sharing these capabilities through the regional CMS, Incident Management and ITS analysis. Additional work has begun through regular meetings with the two other Regional Planning Agencies to explore ways to share this capability across planning area boundaries within the TMA.

Recommendation:

The Capitol Region COG, the Central Connecticut RPA and the Midstate RPA should continue to work together to explore ways of sharing resources to utilize the technical strength of CRCOG and any individual strengths that each region may bring to the planning process for the TMA rather than seeking to duplicate capabilities.

MPO Coordination: CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA, PVPC

The Capitol Region has a very strong working relationship with the MPOs that comprise the Hartford TMA.

Hartford-Springfield Coordination

There is no formal MOU between CRCOG and the PVPC; however, there is a long history of informal coordination and cooperation based on mutual interests in economic growth and transportation. The two regions along with the CCRPA have formed the Hartford Springfield Economic Partnership to conduct joint marketing efforts to promote the Region. The PVPC and CRCOG also have some mutual transportation interests including, I-91, Bradley Airport, CSX rail yard, Amtrak New Haven-Hartford-Springfield rail corridor and the New Haven-Northampton Trail. The staff of the PVPC attended the review and commented on the positive experience they have had interacting with the CRCOG on these important projects.

Hartford Urbanized Area MPO Coordination

The three MPOs that comprise the Hartford Urbanized Area are the CRCOG, the CCRPA and the Midstate Region. The MPOs have a signed MOU detailing how they will coordinate. The staff meets 2-4 times per year, and there are a number of mutual planning activities being conducted.

MOU – The MOU defines the distribution of the Hartford attributable planning funds and the STP-Urban program funds. It also requires planning program coordination including the exchange of UPWPs, TIPs, and LRPs.

Joint Projects – New Britain BRT, Station Area Planning Study, West Study, CCSU Traffic Study, New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Study

Joint Programs – Freight Planning, Jobs Access, CMS, ITS, Incident Management and Security. In addition, the planning agencies within the TMA have coordinated their activities in the area of Congestion Management, Incident Management and ITS.

Other Activities – I-84 TIA and I-91 TIA

Staff from all three MPOs expressed the opinion that the results of the cooperative and coordinated planning program and projects have been positive. There was agreement that the Regions will continue to seek opportunities to coordinate planning efforts wherever feasible.

Recommendation:

The concept of cooperation among the planning regions within the Hartford TMA should continue to be explored and refined both in the area of sharing technical capability, as discussed earlier, and in the area of consistency of plans and programs for the entire TMA region.

The CRCOG should continue to participate with the planning agencies within the Hartford TMA to explore and further develop the precedent already set by the CMS, Incident Management and ITS coordination activities. Other areas might include contracting or sharing of resources between the agencies for the completion of specific studies, development of a coordinated, TMA wide, transportation model and coordinated GIS system or the sharing of expertise relative to EJ, public participation, or other DOT planning requirements.

Update on Title VI Activities Since State/Federal Review

In 2003, the FHWA, FTA and ConnDOT released a report of findings from a Title VI Review conducted in 2002. The CRCOG was found to meet the basic requirements of the Title VI legislation but still given a list of recommended actions to further meet the requirements of Title VI.

The following is a list of accomplishments for the CRCOG.

- EJ Advisory Board – This is a standing committee that regularly reviews the TIP and LRP and explores new issues such as clean diesel buses.
- EJ Representative to the Transportation Committee – A member of the EJ Advisory Board is a full voting member of the CRCOG Transportation Committee and has increased awareness of Title VI issues and clearly influenced CRCOG policies.
- Bus Users Forum – CRCOG support of an expand public outreach and provide forum for input on transit service for the traditionally underserved populations
- Increase in Effective Communication – CRCOG has expanded its mail list, developed a special brochure for the TIP distributed to a direct mail list, and they routinely announce meetings in Spanish language media
- Equity Assessment – CRCOG has made EJ part of the core planning process including TIP and LRP development. They have conducted sophisticated user benefit analysis on individual projects such as Griffin Busway and New Britain Busway
- Limited English Proficiency – They added Spanish language announcements immediately following review and are in the process of putting together a detailed LEP report to identify all language groups within the Region

The activities below are activities the CRCOG plans to undertake to address specific recommendations from the Title VI Review.

Continue EJ Equity Assessments – develop expanded user benefit assessment method

Website – provide alternate language option after LEP report is completed

Meeting Notices – add statement on language options on agendas and do entire agendas in alternative languages for special meetings as necessary

Add Title VI to UPWP and Quarterly Progress Reports – (this has already begun)

LEP – identify LEP groups and address policies (report should be ready in 2 months)

Public Involvement – assess effectiveness of process, completed first annual self assessment this summer.

Planning Requirements Covered by this Review

The Metropolitan Planning Regulations set forth in 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule contain specific requirements for recipients of federal funds that conduct Statewide or Metropolitan Planning. This section addresses each of these requirements as they apply to the transportation planning activities of the Capitol Region Council of Governments in the Hartford-Middletown TMA and the Connecticut portion of the Springfield MA-CT TMA. An attempt was made to examine each of these in detail during the desk review while specific elements

deemed relevant to the specific agency were discussed and observed during the on-site meetings and public meetings.

Organization, Boundaries, Agreements/Contracts

Organization

Regulatory Basis:

Federal legislation (*23 USC 134(b): 49 USC 5303*) requires the designation of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 population. The policy board of the MPO shall consist of (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials.

This designation remains in effect until the MPO is re-designated. The addition of jurisdictional or political bodies into the MPO or members to the policy board generally does not constitute a re-designation of the MPO.

As a result of TEA-21, 23 USC 134(b)(2) was modified with respect to Transportation Management Areas (TMA). Upon designation of a MPO as a TMA (rather than only when the MPO itself is (re)-designated), the policy board shall be structured to include (A) local elected officials, (B) officials of local agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation within the area, and (C) appropriate State officials. Requirement: The organizational requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations are spelled out in Federal Regulation CFR 23 Section 450.306. To the extent possible there will be one Metropolitan Planning Organization for each urbanized area in the State, designated by the Governor through enabling State legislation. The MPO should have a defined organizational structure.

Observations:

As part of the desk review a prepared statement by the CRCOG staff and the CRCOG website were reviewed. The prepared statement indicates that, “the Capitol Region Council of Governments is an association of 29 municipalities, including the capital City of Hartford and 28 surrounding towns. CRCOG is enabled by State statutes that define planning region boundaries and allow the formation of councils of government. The governor designated CRCOG as an MPO in 1973. The CRCOG Policy Board is composed of the chief elected official from each town, with the exception that the City of Hartford, due to its population, is represented by the Mayor, plus three members of the City Council.

Conclusion:

The Capitol Region MPO meets the requirements for organization and designation under 23CFR 450.306.

Boundaries**Regulatory Basis:**

Federal legislation (*23 USC 134(c); 49 USC 53039(d)*) requires boundaries of a metropolitan planning area to be determined by agreement between the metropolitan planning organization and the Governor.

Each metropolitan planning area shall encompass at least the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20- year forecast period; and may encompass the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census. Requirement: CFR 23 Section 450.308 defines the boundary requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations. “The boundaries of the MPO will correspond to a contiguous geographic area.”

Observations: The boundaries of the MPO were designated by the Governor and are spelled out in enabling legislation. The MPO consists of the 29 contiguous municipalities in the Greater Hartford area. The 2000 Census revised the Hartford Urbanized Area to include the geographic entities that comprise the Capitol Region, the Central Connecticut Region and the Midstate Region.

Conclusion:

The boundaries of the Capitol Region MPO are a contiguous geographic area with a finite boundary.

Agreements/Contracts**Regulatory Basis:**

Federal legislation (*23 USC 13*) requires the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to work in cooperation with the State and public transportation agencies in carrying out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan planning process. These agencies determine their respective and mutual roles and responsibilities and procedures governing their cooperative efforts. Federal regulation requires that these relationships be specified in agreements between the MPO and the State and between the MPO and the public transit operators:

- “The responsibilities for cooperatively carrying out transportation planning (including corridor and sub area studies) and programming shall be clearly identified in an agreement or memorandum of understanding between the State and the MPO.” *23 CFR 450.310(a)*
- “There shall be an agreement between the MPO and operators of publicly owned transit services which specifies cooperative procedures for carrying out transportation planning . . .” *23 CFR 450.310 (b)*

The regulations also require an agreement between the MPO and any other agency responsible for air quality planning under the Clean Air Act. A single agreement should be executed among the MPO, State, transit operators, and designated air quality regulations “to the extent possible.”

23 CFR 450.310 (d).

Observations:

The Capitol Region Council of Governments has four Memorandum of Understanding, which help guide the transportation planning process.

1. “Memorandum of Understanding for Transportation Planning in the Capitol Region” – adopted 1997, the purpose of the MOU it to “ensure that an effective transportation program is developed cooperatively among the stakeholders for the Capitol Region”. The MOU defines the roles and responsibilities of the Greater Hartford Transit District, ConnDOT and the Capitol Region.
2. Letter to Commissioner of DEP – adopted 1998, “describes the respective roles and responsibilities for air quality related transportation planning” for both the MPO and the DEP.
3. “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Connecticut Metropolitan Planning Organizations” was adopted in 1995. The purpose of this MOU is “to formally define conditions, terms, and methods by which the MPOs and ConnDOT will expedite the scheduling and movement of projects within the three year TIP/STIP”.
4. “Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Transportation Planning and Funding in the Hartford Urbanized Area” was adopted in 2003. The signatories for this MOU are the four MPOs whose boundaries overlap into the Hartford Urbanized Area, Capitol Region Council of Government, Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, Midstate Regional Planning Agency, and the Council of Governments of the Central Naugatuck Valley. The purpose of the MOU is “to define a method for distributing planning funds, STP-Urban and FTA Section 5307 funds attributable to the Hartford Urbanized Area, and to define the responsibilities of each MPO for carrying out its own transportation planning program”.

Conclusion:

The Capitol Region MPO has adopted the necessary MOUs to promote a cooperative planning process between the State DOT, the local transit operator, the designated air quality agency, DEP, and the MPOs that comprise the Hartford Urbanized Area.

UPWP Development

Regulatory Basis:

23 *CFR* 450.314 identifies the requirements for unified planning work programs (UPWPs) to be prepared in Transportation Management Areas. *CFR* 420.109 governs how FHWA planning funds are distributed to the MPOs. 49 USC 5303 (h) allocates FTA assistance to metropolitan planning organizations. MPOs are required to develop the UPWP in cooperation with the State and public transit agencies [450.314 (a)].

Elements to be included in the UPWP are:

- Discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area and
- Description of all metropolitan transportation planning and transportation-related air quality planning activities anticipated within the next 1- or 2-year period, regardless of funding source or agencies conducting activities, indicating: *Who* will perform the work, *Schedule* for completion of the work, and *Intended products*;
- Include all activities funded under title 23 and the Federal Transit Act [450.314(a)(2)]

Observations:

The CROCOG UPWP is reviewed annually by FHWA and FTA. The UPWP includes a thorough discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan area. The UPWP describes the transportation planning activities that will be undertaken by the CROCOG and by other entities in the Region over one Fiscal Year, the cost of the various activities and the funding sources. The UPWP designates for each project/program any supporting agencies, a schedule for work completion and the products that will be produced.

Furthermore, the MOU between the MPO, the State DOT, and the local transit operator states that the ConnDOT shall: “Assist CROCOG in developing and pursuing an annual UPWP. The ConnDOT shall highlight major statewide issues and/or concerns warranting consideration in the UPWP, establish the extent of state and federal planning resources with which CROCOG may undertake an annual UPWP and make relevant FTA, FHWA and state planning resources available to the CROCOG” the MOU also states, “The Greater

Hartford Transit District shall: Participate in the development of the UPWP to insure that issues of importance are addressed and insight is shared with CRCOG”.

According to a prepared statement the CRCOG “UPWP is prepared each year in cooperation with CRCOG’s Transportation Committee. CRCOG staff prepares the preliminary draft of the UPWP and makes the initial suggestions as to what tasks to include in the work program. The staff prepares an ‘Important Issues’ section of the document that highlights relevant transportation issues that were raised during the course of the previous year through CRCOG’s planning program. These include all relevant community involvement efforts such as the Environmental Justice Advisory Board, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee, the Jobs Access Task Force, and public forums and focus groups for projects such as the update of the Regional Transportation Plan. The issues also include those raised by federal, state, and other partner agencies during the course of the year. Some are given to CRCOG as directives or guidance from funding agencies. Others reflect proposals by partner agencies such as the Greater Hartford Transit district or ConnDOT to initiate special studies. Still other issues simply reflect a desire to respond to emerging issues raised by other entities such as the State Transportation Strategy Board. In any case, the ‘Important Issues’ section of the UPWP is an attempt to identify and summarize key issues that are evolving or current in the region, and to bring focus to the issues in the coming program year. Following the Transportation Committee endorsement, CRCOG’s Policy Board must approve the final document.

The UPWP added freight activities for the first time this year (FFY2005) as a result of the new FHWA emphasis on this area. We expect to undertake an initial freight planning effort this year: identifying and exploring issues, and establishing an organizational format for future efforts. We expect this to be a joint effort of CRCOG, the two other Hartford MPOs, and the Springfield MPOs. We will also work with the State DOT, and the private sector to develop an effective analytic and institutional approach to freight planning.”

Conclusion:

The Capitol Region MPO fulfills its duties as a TMA by developing a comprehensive UPWP in cooperation with the ConnDOT and the local transit operator.

Transportation Planning Process

Regulatory Basis:

The Transportation Planning Process relative to planning factors or, under TEA-21 elements, Public Participation, Title IV, ADA, involvement of other agencies and the preparation of technical reports is contained in the 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part

613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule § 450.316. This section will deal exclusively with the “planning elements” as prescribed by TEA-21 as the other items in this section of the rule will be discussed elsewhere in this report.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, TEA-21, section 3004(b)(1) spells out seven elements that must be considered in the development of transportation plans and programs. These seven elements replace the ISTEA planning factors.

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
4. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life.
5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
6. Promote efficient system management and operation.
7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Proactive public involvement is required, including complete and timely information... to citizens, affected public agencies . . . private providers of transportation . . . [and] local, State, and Federal environment resource agencies as appropriate . . . a minimum comment period of 45 days before the public involvement process is initially adopted or revised . . . full public access to key decisions . . . early and continuous involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPS . . . periodically reviewed by the MPO in terms of their effectiveness. Public involvement must be consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 . . . and identify actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 . . . preparation of technical and other reports to assure documentation of the . . . transportation plan.... [are to be made] reasonably available to interested parties . . .

- *23 CFR 450.320* – Relation to **management systems** (provisions modified as per TEA-21)

In TMAs designated as nonattainment . . . Federal funds may not be programmed for any project (including mass transportation projects) that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles (.unless the project results from a **congestion management system** [*23 CFR 450.320(b)*] meeting the requirements of *23 CFR part 500* In TMAs, the planning process must include the development of a

CMS that provides for effective management of new and existing transportation facilities through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies . . .
[23 CFR 450.320(c)]

Observation:

Prior to the review, the review team asked CRCOG to provide a statement on how they consider these seven elements in their transportation planning process. CRCOG staff provided a very thorough 13-page statement relating the Region’s activities, studies and policies to the seven elements. (This statement is included in Appendix_??_)

In a prepared statement, CRCOG explained how the planning process is coordinated with the providers of transportation within the Region. “The three primary entities providing transit service in the Capitol Region are all represented at the Transportation Committee meetings. This representation on the Transportation Committee is an important part of our coordination with the transit providers.” The CRCOG also sends a staff member to attend the CT Transit Service Review Committee meetings held about three times a year to discuss and approve modifications to the bus service provided by CT Transit.

Conclusion:

We concur that CRCOG is appropriately considering the seven TEA-21 planning elements in their planning process. Furthermore, the CRCOG has developed a strong relationship with providers of transit services to be sure they are included in the planning process.

Regional Transportation Plan Development

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for development of a Metropolitan Transportation Plan are spelled out in § 450.322 of 23 CFR Part 450 and 49 CFR Part 613, Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Final Rule.

“The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include the development of a transportation plan addressing at least a twenty year planning horizon. The plan shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods.” 23 CFR 450.322 The transportation plan is to be updated every three years in non-attainment and maintenance areas to ensure its consistency with changes in land use, demographic, and transportation characteristics.

The regulation also identifies a number of required elements that must be addressed in the Transportation Plan, including:

- Demand analysis [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (1)];
- Congestion management strategies [23 CFR 450.322 (b)(2) and (4)];
- Pedestrian walkway and bicycle facilities [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (3)];
- System preservation [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (5)];
- Design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities, in sufficient detail to permit conformity determinations in nonattainment and maintenance areas [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (6)];
- A multimodal evaluation of the transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (7)];
- Consideration of: the area's comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives, to the extent that they exist; national, State, and local housing goals and strategies, community development and employment plans and strategies, and environmental resource plans; local, State and national goals and objectives such as linking low income households with employment opportunities and the area's overall social, economic, environmental, and energy conservation goals and objectives [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (9)];
- Transportation enhancements [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (10)];
- A financial plan that documents "the consistency of proposed transportation investments with already available and projected sources of revenue" [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (11)]
- Public official and citizen involvement (in accordance with the requirements of 23 CFR 450.316 (b)(1)), including participation during the early stages of plan development, availability of document for public review, and at least one formal public meeting in nonattainment TMAs [23 CFR 450.322 (c)];
- Conformity determination in nonattainment and maintenance areas 23 CFR 450.316 (d)];

Copies must be provided to FHWA or FTA [23 CFR 450.322 (e)].

Observation:

After reviewing the Capitol Region Transportation Plan we find that the plan addresses the seven planning elements in developing projects and policies for the Capitol Region.

The CRCOG Transportation Plan includes a twenty year planning horizon and identifies projects for implementation in three time periods, years 1-5, years 6-10 and years 11-20.

The Plan contains a chapter "Linking Land Use and Transportation", which renews the emphasis on the issue of coordinating transportation policies with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Plan is financially constrained, containing both an estimate of project costs over the twenty-year time frame and an estimated revenue stream. The plan includes capital, operating and maintenance costs. Page 56 of the plan includes a table titled, “Preliminary Timetable for Implementation”, which segregates the projects by year.

The CRCOG has a well developed travel model which is used to forecast future traffic volumes on roads and future ridership on transit services. The CRCOG also used a modeling program to perform a “specialty equity assessments for two proposed rapid transit elements”.

Public comments on the Plan were solicited and the Plan includes a section detailing comments made at the public meetings or received via mail. The Plan also includes a description of the disposition of comments. In a prepared statement the CRCOG stated that “every written comment received during a public review period is acknowledged. Oral comments whether by phone or during a public meeting are also acknowledged. In cases where proposed changes are impossible or difficult due to technical considerations, these considerations are explained. When proposals are cost prohibitive, this is also explained. In some cases, alternatives suggested by the community are tested even if the CRCOG staff intuitively feel the alternative is not viable. In most cases, the test demonstrates why the alternative is not viable. In such cases the extra work required for the test is still worthwhile since the public feels their comments were considered, and because they better understand the problems with their suggestion and why it is not viable.”

The State is indirectly involved in many aspects of the Region’s Plan. “Many of the projects recommended in the Plan are derived directly from separate planning states, for which the State DOT was the lead agency conducting the study and CRCOG an active partner.”

“The public involvement process is reviewed informally after every effort at public outreach is made: what worked, what didn’t, what should we do differently next time.” The CRCOG has instituted a “formal” analysis of their public outreach efforts. “All senior transportation staff met on two occasions to evaluate efforts. Each program manager described the public involvement efforts in his or her projects and programs. The group critiqued these efforts to determine what was effective and what was not. Also discussed *why* some methods were effective and others were not. This analysis will form the basis for any changes to be made in the Public Involvement Policy.”

“Annual Self-Assessment. The type of self-assessment described above will become an annual effort. Each year, we will review the community involvement efforts of the prior 12 months to evaluate their effectiveness. Lessons learned for the annual assessments will be applied immediately to ongoing or new projects. This will not necessarily require a formal policy change since the policy is broadly stated and does not prescribe specific techniques.”

Conclusion:

The CRCOG Regional Transportation Plan meets the requirements of 23 CFR, Section 450.322 and is the result of considerable local involvement and a robust planning process.

TIP and Project Selection

Regulatory Basis:

The MPO is required, under *23CFR 450.324*, to develop a transportation improvement program (TIP) in cooperation with the State and public transit operators. Specific requirements and conditions, as specified in the regulations, include:

- Updating of the TIP and approval by the MPO and Governor, according to a cycle (at least every two years) compatible with development of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). [*23CFR 450.324(b)*]
- Conformity determination by FHWA and FTA in non-attainment and maintenance areas. [*23CFR 450.324(b)*]
- Reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with *23CFR 450.316(b)(1)* and, in non-attainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process. [*23CFR 450.324(c)*]
- The TIP shall cover a period of at least 3 years; additional years may be covered if priorities are identified and financial information is provided. [*23CFR 450.324 (d)*]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall give priority to eligible TCMs identified in the SIP [*23CFR 450.324 (d)*] and projects included for the first two years shall be limited to those for which funds are available or committed. [*23CFR 450.324 (e)*]
- The TIP shall be financially constrained by year and include a financial plan identifying projects that can be implemented using current revenue sources and projects requiring proposed additional sources. The State and the transit operator must provide MPOs with estimates of Federal and State funds available for the transportation system serving the metropolitan area. [*23CFR 450.324 (e)*]
- The TIP shall include: all transportation projects, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, proposed for funding under title 23, U.S.C., including Federal Lands Highway projects, but excluding safety projects funded under *23 U.S.C 402*, emergency relief projects, and planning and research activities not funded with NHS, STP or MA funds; all regionally significant transportation projects for which FHWA or FTA approval is required and, for informational purposes, all regionally significant projects to be funded from non-Federal sources; only projects that are consistent with the Transportation Plan. [*23CFR 450.324(f)*]

- Information shall be provided as follows for each project included in the TIP: sufficient descriptive material to identify the project or phase; estimated total cost; the amount of Federal funds proposed to be obligated during each program year; proposed source of Federal and non-Federal funds; identification of funding recipient/project sponsor; in non-attainment and maintenance areas, identification of TCMs and sufficiently detailed description to permit conformity determination. The total Federal share of projects proposed for funding under section 9 of the Federal Transit Act may not exceed authorized funding levels available to the area. [23CFR 450.324(g), (h) and (k)]
- Projects that the State and MPO do not consider to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year may be grouped by function, geographical area, and work type. [23CFR 450.324(i)]. In non-attainment and maintenance areas, classifications must be consistent with the exempt project classifications contained in the U.S. EPA conformity requirements. [40 CFR part 51]
- Suballocation of Surface Transportation Program (STP) or section 9 funds to individual jurisdictions or modes shall not be used (unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the distribution of funds is based on considerations addressed as part of the planning process). [23CFR 450.324 (l)]
- As a management tool for monitoring progress in implementing the Transportation Plan, the TIP shall identify the criteria and process for prioritizing the implementation of Transportation Plan elements through the TIP; list major projects implemented from the previous TIP and identify significant delays in implementation. [23CFR 450.324(n)(1) and (2)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall describe progress in implementing required TCMs and include a list of all projects found to conform in a previous TIP and which are now part of the base case in determining conformity [23CFR 450.324(n)(3) and (4)];
- FTA and/or FHWA administrators may approve operating assistance in the absence of an approved metropolitan TIP. [23CFR 450.324(o)]

Several other regulations govern different aspects of TIP development and implementation:

- 23CFR 450.326 addresses modification of the TIP, stating that the TIP can be modified at any time, subject to the following conditions:
 - In non-attainment or maintenance areas, adding or deleting projects that affect emission levels requires a new conformity determination
 - Public involvement opportunities are provided consistent with requirements for complete information, timely notice, full public access to key decisions, and other relevant provisions.

- *23CFR 450.328* governs the relationship between TIP and STIP:
 - A Governor- and MPO- approved TIP shall be included without modification in the STIP
 - In nonattainment and maintenance areas, a conformity finding by FHWA and FTA must be made before incorporation in the STIP
- In TMAs, all Title 23 and Federal Transit Act funded projects not included in the first year of the TIP as an “agreed to” list of projects (except projects on the NHS and projects funded under the bridge, interstate maintenance, and Federal Lands Highways programs) shall be selected from the approved metropolitan TIP by the MPO, in consultation with the State and Transit operator. [*23CFR 450.332 (b)*]
- The first year of an approved TIP shall constitute an “agreed to” list of projects unless Federal funds available are significantly less than authorized amounts. [*23CFR 450.332(c)*]
- If the State or transit operator(s) wish to proceed with a project in the second or third year of the TIP, MPO project selection procedures must be followed unless expedited project selection procedures formally exist. [*23CFR 450.332(c)*]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, priority will be given to the timely implementation of TCMs included in the applicable SIP. [*23CFR 450.332 (e)*]

TEA-21 [23USC134(h)(7)(B)] requires the publication of an annual listing of projects for which Federal funds have been obligated in the preceding year. This list shall be consistent with the categories identified in the TIP.

Requirement: The requirements for developing, approving and amending the Transportation Improvement Program are stated in CFR 23 Section 450.324. The TIP must be developed as a cooperative process between the MPO, the State DOT, and the local transit operator. The TIP must be updated at least every two years and be compatible with the STIP development schedule. The TIP must cover a period of not less than three years. Amendment can be made to the TIP at anytime. If the amendment does not change the scope of the project or greatly increase the cost, an administrative action can be used to make the change, i.e., an MPO staff person can be designated to sign off on these actions rather than needing a Policy Board adoption. The MPO should allow for a reasonable opportunity for public comment. The TIP must be fiscally constrained by the programmed funds for each Fiscal Year of the TIP.

Observations:

As part of the desk review the TIP and the Memorandum of Understanding for Transportation Planning in the Capitol Region were reviewed. The MOU describes the process by which the TIP will be cooperatively developed by the CRCOG, the ConnDOT, and the Greater Hartford Transit District. The TIP covers a five year period and has been updated within a two-year time frame. The CRCOG does use the administrative action abilities to amend the TIP when appropriate.

“All major projects in the TIP are derived directly from the RTP. Smaller projects such as intersection reconstruction projects are also consistent with the general policies contained in the RTP that encourage better systems management and operational improvements.”

The CRCOG staff sometime uses “specific selection criteria during the project selection process for individual funding programs such as the STP-Urban program, but they are not used for inclusion in the TIP.” Prior to projects being put into the TIP “they undergo a review by CRCOG staff, CRCOG’s Transportation Committee, and CT DOT officials. The review conducted by CRCOG and its committees tends to focus on the general nature of the project and its potential impacts on the affected community. “

A comprehensive public comment process was used when updating the TIP. The CRCOG TIP is fiscally constrained by Fiscal Year as demonstrated by the summary table. The TIP contains a project listing by funding source by year that is easily comparable to the summary table.

Conclusion:

The TIP is developed through a comprehensive and cooperative process.

Project Selection Procedures

Requirement: CFR 23 Section 450, Subpart C – Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Program spells out a comprehensive planning process for MPOs to follow. Generally, the development and selection of projects for funding shall be completed through a comprehensive planning process with local input. Projects should be identified in the Transportation Plan and listed in the Transportation Improvement Program, and be developed through various planning methods.

Observations:

The CRCOG prepared response state that “specific selection criteria are sometimes used during the project selection process for individual funding programs such as the STP-Urban program, but they are not used for inclusion in the TIP. However, prior to a project being included in the TIP it undergoes a review by CRCOG staff, CRCOG’s Transportation Committee, and CT DOT officials. The review conducted by CRCOG and its committees tends to focus on the general nature of the project and its potential impacts on the affected community.

For STP-Urban projects, a detailed project selection policy is used by the Transportation Committee to guide the project selection process. This policy has specific project rating criteria that assigns points for nine different categories (structural improvement, traffic

improvement, traffic volume, regional significance, other benefits, municipal road, transit/traffic calming, derived from corridor study, environmental justice). After a list of top-rated proposals is prepared, the Transportation Committee has the opportunity to review, comment and approve.”

Conclusion:

The CRCOG uses a comprehensive planning process to select projects for inclusion in the Transportation Plan and the TIP. In particular the STP-Urban program selection criteria is a good example of a selection process that is uniform and unbiased.

Financial Planning

Regulatory Basis:

There are two sections of CFR 23 which define financial requirements of MPOs they are Section 450.322(b)(11) and Section 450.324(d).

The provisions related to the Transportation Plan include the following requirements:

- Demonstrates consistency of proposed transportation investments with already available and project sources of revenue
- Compares estimated revenue from existing and proposed sources that can reasonably be expected to be available to estimated costs of constructing, maintaining, and operating the total transportation system over the period of the plan
- Describes funding shortfalls by existing revenue source and identifies strategies for ensuring availability of proposed new revenues or revenue source
- Balances existing and proposed revenues with all forecasted capital, operating, and maintenance costs of the existing and planned transportation system
- Reflects existing revenues and historical trends
- For nonattainment/maintenance areas, addresses the specific financial strategies to ensure implementation of required air quality projects (Also see *Air Quality* topic area.)

The provisions related to the TIP include the following requirements:

- Demonstrates financial constraint by year
- Includes a financial plan demonstrating which projects can be implemented with current revenue sources and which projects require proposed revenue sources

- Takes into account the costs of adequately maintaining and operating the existing transportation system
- Developed by the MPO in cooperation with the State and transit operator
- Developed with estimates of available federal and state funds provided by the state and transit operator
- Includes only projects for which construction and operating funds can reasonably be expected to be available
- Includes strategies for ensuring the availability of new funding sources
- For the financial analysis, considers all projects funded with Federal, state, local private resources.
- In nonattainment/maintenance areas, only includes projects for which funds are available and committed in the first two years.

These two sections are paraphrased as follows. The financial plan in the Metropolitan Long Range Plan shall compare the estimated revenue from existing and proposed funding sources that can reasonably be expected to be available for transportation uses, and the estimated costs of constructing, maintaining, and operating the total transportation system over the period of the plan. The plan should include a summary table of funding by time periods and program.

The MPO's Transportation Improvement Program shall be financially constrained by year and include a financial plan that demonstrates which projects can be implemented using current and projected revenue sources. The TIP should include a summary table by year and source of funding. The project listings should be by funding year to be able to easily ascertain the TIP is financially constrained.

Observations:

As part of the desk review the Capitol Region's TIP and Transportation Plan were reviewed. On pages 53-56 of the Transportation Plan the cost for constructing, maintaining and operating the total transportation System over the next 20 years is outlined. The 20-year program is divided into three time periods 1-5 Years, 5-10 Years, and 11-20 Years. On page 56 is a table, which shows the cost distribution by time period and program.

On pages 8-12 of the TIP there are summary tables, which show the total project costs by year and funding program. Appendix A includes a list of projects to be funded, which is easily compared to the summary table to determine financial constraint.

Conclusion:

The CRCOG demonstrates financial constraint in both its Long Range Transportation Plan and in its Transportation Improvement Program.

Air Quality Conformity

Regulatory Basis:

Section 176 (c)(1) of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendment (CAAA) states: “No metropolitan planning organization designated under *Section 134 of title 23, United States Code*, shall give its approval to any project, program, or plan which does not conform to an implementation plan approved or promulgated under section 110.” The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 subsequently included provisions responsive to the mandates of the CAAA. Implementing regulations have maintained this strong connection.

Provisions governing air quality-related transportation planning are incorporated in a number of metropolitan planning regulations, rather than being the primary focus of one or several regulations. For MPOs that are declared to be air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, there are many special requirements in addition to the basic requirements for a metropolitan planning process. These include formal agreements to address air quality planning requirements, requirements for setting metropolitan planning area boundaries, interagency coordination, Transportation Plan content and updates, requirements for a Congestion Management System (CMS), public meeting requirements, and conformity findings on Transportation Plans and TIPs. Sections of the metropolitan planning regulations governing air quality are summarized below:

- An agreement is required between the MPO and the designated agency responsible for air quality planning describing their respective roles and responsibilities (Also see *Agreements and Contracts* topic area) [23 CFR 450.310 (c)]
- In a metropolitan area that does not include the entire nonattainment or maintenance area, an agreement is required among the State department of transportation, State air quality agency, affected local agencies, and the MPO providing for cooperative planning in the area outside the metropolitan planning area but within the nonattainment or maintenance area. [23 CFR 450.310 (f)] In metropolitan areas with more than one MPO, an agreement is required among the State and the MPOs describing how they will coordinate to develop an overall transportation plan for the metropolitan area, and in nonattainment and maintenance areas, the agreement is required to include State and local air quality agencies [23 CFR 450.310 (g)]
- The MPO is required to coordinate development of the Transportation Plan with the SIP development process, including the development of transportation control

measures (see *Regional Transportation Plan* topic area). [23 CFR 450.312 (c)] The MPO shall not approve any Transportation Plan or program that does not conform with the SIP [23 CFR 450.312 (d)]

- In TMAs designated as nonattainment areas, Federal funds may not be programmed for any project that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles, unless the project results from a CMS meeting the requirements of 23 CFR part 500, subpart E. [23 CFR 450.320 (b)].

- The Transportation Plan shall identify SOV projects that result from a CMS meeting Federal requirements. [23 CFR 450.322 (b) (4)] and include design concept and scope descriptions

of all existing and future transportation facilities to permit conformity determinations [23 CFR 450.322 (b)(6)]. The FHWA, FTA, and MPO must make a conformity determination on any new or revised Transportation Plan in nonattainment and maintenance areas (see *Regional Transportation Plan* topic area). [23 CFR 450.322 (d)]

- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the FHWA, FTA and MPO must make a conformity determination on any new or amended TIPs [23 CFR 450.324 (b)] and [23 CFR 450.330 (b)].
- In non-attainment TMAs, there must be an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process [23 CFR 450.324 (c)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall give priority to eligible TCMs identified in the approved SIP and shall provide for their timely implementation. [23 CFR 450.324(d) and 450.330 (b)]
- In non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall include all regionally significant transportation projects proposed to be funded with Federal and non-Federal funds [23 CFR 450.324 (f)(4) and (5)] and identify projects identified as TCMs in the SIP [23 CFR 450.324 (g)(6)]. Projects shall be specified in sufficient detail to permit air quality analysis in accordance with U.S. EPA conformity requirements. [23 CFR 450.324 (h)]
- For the purpose of including Federal Transit Act section 5309 (former section 3) funded projects in a TIP, in non-attainment and maintenance areas, the TIP shall describe the progress in implementing required TCMs [23 CFR 450.324 (m) (3) and include a list of all projects found to conform in a previous TIP and are now part of the base case used in air quality conformity analysis [23 CFR 450.324 (m) (4)].
- In non-attainment or maintenance areas, if the TIP is amended by adding or deleting projects that affect transportation-related emissions, a new conformity determination will be required. [23 CFR 450.326]

In TMAs that are non-attainment or maintenance areas, the FHWA and FTA will review and evaluate the transportation planning process to assure that the process is adequate to ensure conformity of plans and programs in accordance with procedures contained in *40 CFR part 51. [23 CFR 450.334 (c)]*. Air Quality requirements are spelled out in CFR 23 Section 450.322(d) and Section 450.324(b). “In nonattainment and maintenance areas for transportation related pollutants the MPO must make a conformity determination on any new/revised transportation plan or Transportation Improvement Program, in accordance with the CAA and the EPA conformity regulations.”

Observations:

The primary mechanism that assures that the TIP and RTP conform to the SIP is the air quality conformity review process. This process is based on the emissions budgets established by CT DEP in the SIP. Due to the small size of the individual regions relative to the size of the two air quality (ozone) districts in Connecticut the ConnDOT conducts the emissions analysis for the TIP. The individual regions review and confirm that the data supports the CAA.

“For the 2004 RTP, CRCOG relied on the CT DOT to perform the emissions analysis. CRCOG then used the results to prepare its own summary report on how CRCOG’s proposed RTP and all other RTPs in the Greater Connecticut Air Quality District compared to the emissions budget for the District. The results show that the Hartford Region met all budget tests and conform to the SIP.”

“The limited relationship between CT DEP and the Capitol Region is specified in the 1998 ‘Letter of agreement on air quality & transportation planning’ signed by CRCOG and CT DEP. This agreement requires that CRCOG provide copies of our meeting agendas, TIP, and RTP. They also require CT DEP to review the TIP and RTP to assure they conform to the SIP and to attend CRCOG meetings as needed.”

CRCOG’s planning process is generally very supportive of improving air quality in the Hartford area.

Conclusion:

The CRCOG uses an acceptable practice to determine air quality conformity in both the TIP and the Transportation Plan.

Outreach/Public Participation

Regulatory Basis:

The requirements for public involvement are set forth primarily in *23 CFR 450.316(b)(1)*, which addresses elements of the metropolitan planning process (see also *Transportation Planning Process* topic area.) Public involvement also is addressed specifically in connection with the Transportation Plan in *450.322(c)* and the TIP in *450.324(c)*; air quality-related public involvement requirements, which pertain to the Transportation Plan and TIP, also are included in *450.322(c)* and *450.324(c)*,

Requirements related to the planning process generally are summarized in *450.316(b)(1)*, as follows:

- A proactive process
- Complete information
- Timely public notice of public involvement activities and information about transportation issues and processes
- Full public access to key decisions and time for public review and comment
- Early and continuing public involvement in developing the TIP
- A minimum public comment period of 45 days before adoption or revision of the public involvement process
- Minimum 30-day review period for Transportation Plan, TIP and major amendments in nonattainment areas classified as serious and above
- Explicit consideration and response to public input
- Consideration of the needs of people traditionally underserved by transportation systems, including low-income and minority households; consistency with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including actions necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- Periodic review of public involvement effectiveness
- Coordination of metropolitan and statewide public involvement processes

The requirements pertaining to the Transportation Plan (*450.322(c)*) are further elaborated as follows:

- Opportunity for public official and citizen involvement in the development of the Transportation Plan, in accordance with *450.316(b)(1)*, including involvement in the early stages of Plan development, public comment on the proposed Plan, at least one formal public meeting annually to review planning assumptions and the plan development process

TIP related requirements [450.324 (c)] include:

Reasonable opportunity for public comment in accordance with the requirements of 450.316(b)(1) and, in nonattainment TMAs, an opportunity for at least one formal public meeting during the TIP development process and provision for public review and comment. The passage of ISTEA in 1991 marked the beginning on an increased emphasis on the role of the public in making transportation decisions that effect their locality.

Public involvement in the transportation planning process is a major feature of ISTEA and TEA-21. The metropolitan planning regulations state that, “The metropolitan transportation planning process shall include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs”. To this end, MPOs must develop and adopt a formal public involvement process for planning and program development.

Observation:

The CRCOG supplied the review team with two documents, the Public Involvement Policy adopted June 21, 2000 and the Environmental Justice Action Plan adopted June 2002. The CRCOG is completing an annual assessment of its public involvement efforts and, based on that assessment, will update its Public Involvement Policy in FY 2005.

In a prepared statement the CRCOG staff stated, that “the public involvement process is reviewed informally after every effort at public outreach is made: what worked, what didn’t, what should we do differently next time. However, this year is the first year we have made a “formal” analysis of our efforts over the last few years. All senior transportation staff met on two occasions to evaluate our efforts. Each program manager described the public involvement efforts in his or her projects and programs. The group critiqued these efforts to determine what was effective and what was not. We also discussed *why* some methods were effective and others were not. This analysis will form the basis for any changes to be made in the Public Involvement Policy.”

“Annual Self-Assessment. The type of self-assessment described above will become an annual effort. Each year, we will review the community involvement efforts of the prior 12 months to evaluate their effectiveness. Lessons learned for the annual assessments will be applied immediately to ongoing or new projects. This will not necessarily require a formal policy change since the policy is broadly stated and does not prescribe specific techniques.”

The Public Participation Policy has not been updated since the last Certification Review due to work in the area of Environmental Justice. Hence the recommendation from the last certification review that the next time the Public Participation Policy is updated

discussion of the Administrative Adjustment and the STP-Urban Program process should be added and referenced in the TIP and Transportation Plan has not been accomplished.

Conclusion:

CRCOG has taken on the spirit of public participation throughout their transportation planning process and they are assessing what works well and what does not work so well in an effort to improve this effort. We recognize this as a significant effort that can be a model to many planning agencies around the state, the region or the nation.

Recommendation:

The next time the Public Participation Policy is updated discussion of the Administrative Adjustment process should be included and the STP-Urban Program process should be made a part of the Public Participation Policy and referenced in the TIP and Transportation Plan.

Self Certification

Regulatory Basis:

Certification review by FTA and FHWA is required in TMAs at least once every three years, in addition to the annual self-certification by the MPO and State. Requirement: Metropolitan Planning Organizations must annually certify that the planning process ...is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of:

- Section 134 of title 23, U.S.C.
- Section 5303 of the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. app. 1607),
- the Metropolitan Planning Regulations,
- Sections 174 and 174 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act
- Section 1003(b) of ISTEA (as incorporated in TEA-21) *49CFR part 26* regarding the involvement of DBE in FHWA & FTA funded planning projects.
- The provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Observation:

The FTA and FHWA planning funds are administered via contract between CONNDOT and the MPOs and planning agencies in the State of Connecticut. The State certifies to FHWA and FTA annually that the planning process by which the annual STIP is developed is in compliance with the above requirements. The FHWA and FTA make a finding that this is the case annually as part of the approval of the STIP.

Conclusion:

It is the responsibility of ConnDOT to assure that all requirements are met and that the MPOs are cognizant of these requirements and providing documentation to ConnDOT that they are being satisfied. The CRCOG provides documentation on an annual basis to the ConnDOT stating compliance with Federal and State requirements.

Title VI and Related Requirements**Regulatory Basis:**

It has been the U.S. Department of Transportation's (US DOT) longstanding policy to actively ensure non-discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI states the "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under a program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title VI bars intentional discrimination as well as disparate impact discrimination (e.g., a neutral policy or practice that has the effect of a disparate impact on protected groups). *23 CFR 450.334(a)(3)* requires the FHWA and FTA to certify that the "planning process . . . is being conducted in accordance with all applicable requirements of . . . Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Title VI assurance executed by each State under *23 U.S.C 324 and 29 U.S.C. 794.*"

Executive Order 12898, issued in 1994, further amplifies Title VI by providing that "each Federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations." In compliance with *Executive Order 12898*, the US DOT Order on Environmental Justice was issued in 1997.

Observation:

The MPO and ConnDOT annually self certify that their planning programs are carried out in accordance with the provision of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The following information on activity related to Title VI was taken directly from a prepared statement supplied by CRCOG to the review team.

In 2002, CRCOG adopted the EJ Action Plan and established an EJ Advisory Board. This Board meets on an as-needed basis and already has reviewed two TIPS and provided significant input to the development of the most recent Regional Transportation Plan. The latter point is especially important. A special focus group session was conducted with the EJAB to identify transportation issues that were important to low-income and

minority communities. Six issues were identified and subsequently included in the RTP as regional priorities. In addition, a representative of the EJAB has been added as a voting member to CRCOG Transportation Committee. This representative insures that the needs, values and issues of low-income and minority populations are addressed during the discussion of transportation issues in the Region.

As an example of how comments have resulted in changes in CRCOG policy, at the recommendation of the EJ representative to CRCOG's Transportation Committee, an EJ benefit consideration has been added to the STP-Urban project selection criteria.

"Measurement" of an effort is of necessity subjective. We, therefore, measure our effort by the feedback we receive from representatives of EJ communities and Title VI protected groups. We have never received a negative comment about our efforts and have quite often received positive recognition for those same efforts. The fact that we have been able to establish a working EJ Advisory Board and that members continue to attend and contribute to meetings is an indication of the perceived value of this effort

As a more "objective" measure of our implementation of Title VI and EJ, we have analyzed the projects listed in our TIP to determine if the benefits of those projects are distributed equitably across targeted neighborhoods. Members of the EJ Advisory Board determined from this analysis that projects are, in fact, distributed equitably across targeted neighborhoods.

A demographic profile of minority and low-income residents in the Capitol Region was developed following the completion of the Environmental Justice Challenge Grant in 2002. The report, *Atlas of Minority and Low-Income Populations in the Capitol Region*, is included as part of the mailed desk review package.

CRCOG has done extensive work on the development and use of equity assessment methods. These methods are currently used to assess the distribution of projects in the TIP relative to the distribution of low-income and minority populations, and to assess the distribution of user benefits from major transit projects relative to 0-car, 1-car, and multi-car households. A full explanation was presented at the MPO Certification meeting.

CRCOG is currently undertaking an analysis to determine the spatial location of persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) so as to target any efforts at making our planning documents available in appropriate languages (other than English.) A policy in that regard will be developed upon completion of the analysis. The policy will address the CRCOG website as well as all other means of information distribution. However, we believe it is more important to focus initially on the other types of media since many of the LEP households do not have easy access to the Internet. This point was recently made at the Bus Users Forum (September 29, 2004) when a representative of the

Hispanic community emphasized that CT Transit should not rely on the Internet to get information to the low-income residents because most do not have Internet service. The Spanish language brochures distributed on the buses are far more effective.

At this time, CRCOG has begun purchasing Spanish-language advertisements for projects and program meetings that are of significance to the Hispanic communities in our Region. Some of information brochures have also translated into Spanish. Our meetings have always been held in locations accessible to disabled persons. We have advertised the opportunity to request an interpreter for the hearing impaired.

Conclusion:

CRCOG has demonstrated a commitment to thoroughly address the requirement of the Title VI legislation and the executive order on Environmental Justice.

Recommendation:

The CRCOG should continue to implement the activities as detailed above.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Regulatory Basis:

The FHWA Final Rule and FTA Policy on Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture and Standards were issued on January 8, 2001, to implement section 5206(e) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). This Final Rule/Policy requires that all ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account conform to the National ITS Architecture, as well as to USDOT adopted ITS Standards. The Final Rule on ITS Architecture and Standards is published in 23 CFR Part 940.

23 CFR Part 940 states that:

- Regions implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must have a regional ITS architecture in place by April 8, 2005. Regions not implementing ITS projects at the time the Final Rule/Policy was issued must develop a regional ITS architecture within four years from the date their first ITS project advances to final design.
- All ITS projects funded by the Highway Trust Fund (including the Mass Transit Account), whether they are stand-alone projects or combined with non-ITS projects, must be consistent with the Final Rule/Policy.
- Major ITS projects should move forward based on a project level architecture that clearly reflects consistency with the National ITS architecture.

- All projects shall be developed using a systems engineering process.
- Projects must use USDOT adopted ITS standards as appropriate.

Compliance with the regional ITS architecture will be in accordance with USDOT oversight and Federal-aid procedures, similar to non-ITS projects.

Observations:

CRCOG has been an active participant and partner with ConnDOT in the development of the ITS Implementation Plan (1997) and the Regional ITS Architecture (2004.) The stakeholders include: ConnDOT; CT Department of Public Safety (including the State Police); CT Department of Environmental Protection; CT Department of Motor Vehicles; CT Transit; the Greater Hartford Transit District; the Middletown Transit District; the Rideshare Company; private operators, including DATTCO and the New Britain Transportation Company; Towing and Recovery Professionals of CT; local public works departments; local police departments; local fire departments; the regional emergency medical services agency; Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency; Midstate Regional Planning Agency; and CRCOG.

The Regional ITS Architecture for the Hartford Area was completed this past summer following an intensive outreach effort to stakeholders. ConnDOT, CRCOG, CCRPA, and MRPA coordinated this effort. Karen Olson, Principal Transportation Planner, has primary responsibility for coordinating ITS activities at CRCOG. She is the liaison between ConnDOT, which has primary responsibility for implementing ITS projects, and the local ITS stakeholders, who propose many of the ITS projects and are the beneficiaries of same projects. Ms. Olson is also responsible for guiding the activities of the Greater Hartford Incident Management Steering Committee. Thomas Maziarz, Director of Transportation Planning at CRCOG, supervises all of these activities.

Conclusion:

The CRCOG will meet the requirement of having an ITS Architecture in place by April 2005.

Appendix A Composition of the Review Team

The two individuals listed below were responsible for reviewing all pre-meeting materials, conducting the on-site review, and writing the final certification report.

Barbara Breslin
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B. List of Participants and On-Site Review Agenda

The following individuals attended the on-site review held on November 3rd at the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency Office.

Federal Representatives:

Andrew Motter, FTA, Barbara Breslin, FHWA-CT, Amy-Jackson Grove, FHWA-CT, Robert Ramirez, FHWA-CT and Chris DiPalma, FHWA-MA

Connecticut Department of Transportation Representatives:

Gerald Jennings, Mark Phillips, Grayson Wright, Debra Gott, Hal Decker, Jim Mona, and Michael Sanders.

Capitol Region Council of Governments Staff Representatives:

Lyle Wray, Thomas Maziarz, Karen Olson, Mario Marrero, Jennifer Carrier, Sandra Fry, Linda Osten and Dan Czaja

Others:

Jim Mason - AllAboard!

Dave Rhindlander - Andover – Selectman

Jon Colman – Bloomfield

Kenneth Shooshan-Stoller – Central Connecticut RPA

Richard Lourie – CT Bicycle Coalition

Mark Mitchell, MD - CT Coalition for Environmental Justice

Dawn Simensen – CT Coalition for Environmental Justice

Robin Maillett – CT Department of Social Services

David Lee – CT Transit

Philip Fry – CT Transit

Dave Kilbon – East Granby – First Selectman

Bruce Chudwick – Farmington Town Council Chair

Art Handman – Greater Hartford Transit District

Kathleen Henry – Hartford Environmental Justice Network

Robert Haramut – Midstate RPA

Gary Roux – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Dana Roscoe – Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Patrice Carson – Somers Town Planner

Sue Prosi – Southwest Regional Planning Agency

Marilyn Risi – Upper Albany Mian Street

Chuck Guarino – West Hartford

Bill Austin – West Hartford – Fire Chief, CREPC

Brad Smith – Windsor Resident

The following is the agenda for this on-site visit.

Hartford TMA Certification Review:
Capitol Region Council of Governments

Date: October 20, 2004
Location: South Congregation Church, 277 Main Street, Hartford
Enter through the rear of the building on John Street.
Parking is available in the rear of the building as well.

Agenda:

- 8:30 – 8:45 Introduction
- 8:45 – 9:45 Transit & TOD Planning
- Transit efforts & progress since last certification (20 min)
 - TOD efforts since last certification (10 min)
 - Coordination with ConnDOT, CT Transit, Transit District
 - o Discussion with partnering agencies (30 min)
- 9:45 – 10:15 Planning for Pedestrians, Bicycles, and Livable Communities
- Overview of efforts & progress since last certification
 - Coordination with CT DEP, CT Bike Coalition, major employers
- 10:15 – 10:30 Break
- 10:30 – 11:10 Discussion with Transportation Committee & others regarding CRCOG's Planning Process
- Discussion with Committee members & interested persons regarding planning process
 - Opportunity for public comment
- 11:10 – 11:30 Building Technical Capabilities
- Travel Model, GIS, CMS
- 11:30 – 12:00 MPO Coordination: CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA, PVPC
- Overview of coordination efforts: coordination meetings, MOUs, special projects such as New Britain BRT & NHHS Rail (10 minutes)
 - Discussion with program managers: PVPC, CCRPA, MRPA, CRCOG (20 min)
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 2:00 Joint Hartford MPO Programs
- Freight Planning (15 Min.) – *includes PVPC also*
 - Job Access (15 Min.)
 - CMS (30 Min.)
- 2:00 – 2:45 Joint Hartford MPO Programs (Continued)
- ITS Plan, ITS Architecture, Incident Management & Security (20 Min.)
 - Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee (10 minutes)
 - Discussion with partnering agencies: ConnDOT, CREPC, MPOs
- 2:45 – 3:00 Break
- 3:00 – 4:00 Update on Title VI Activities Since State/Federal Review
- Environmental Justice & LEP (20 min)
 - Public Involvement Policy & Practices (15 min)
 - Discussion with public & interested parties

C. Listing of Documents Provided for the Desk Review

1. UPWP: FFY 2003, 2004, 2005
2. Regional Transportation Plan, adopted March 23, 2004
3. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): FFY 2003-2005 and FFY2005-2009
4. CRCOG Public Involvement Policy, adopted June 21, 2000
5. CRCOG Environmental Justice Action Plan, adopted June 26, 2002
6. Hartford Area Congestion Management System project overview
7. The Capitol Region ITS Regional Architecture Final Report: the website for the Architecture is http://consystec.com/hartford/web/_regionhome.htm
8. Atlas of Minority and Low-Income Populations in the Capitol Region
9. Environmental Justice and CRCOG's Transportation Planning Program, Executive Summary
10. Bradley Area Transportation Study: Transportation Management and Improvement Plan
11. Bradley Area Transportation Study: Executive Summary
12. Route 190 Corridor Study: Final Report
13. Route 190 Corridor Study: Executive Summary
14. Walkability Workshops: Final Report
15. Building Livable Communities, Fall 2004
16. Incident Management News, December 2002, August 2003, February 2004
17. Griffin Busway Feasibility Study: Final Report
18. Griffin Busway Feasibility Study: Technical Appendix

D. Various Memorandum of Understanding

The following pages contain the various memorandum of understanding, which exist between CRCOG and the various organizations in the Region involved in the planning process.

E. MPO Statement of Activities Relative to the Seven Planning Elements

The following pages contain a statement prepared by the Capitol Region Council of Governments regarding how the Region's planning process is addressing the seven planning elements.

SEVEN METROPOLITAN PLANNING FACTORS

Section 3004(b)(1) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century requires metropolitan transportation planning organizations to consider seven factors in developing transportation plans and programs. The seven factors are:

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight
4. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life
5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight
6. Promote efficient system management and operation
7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

The sections below describe how CRCOG addresses each of the seven planning factors in the conduct of its transportation planning program. While each description is a good accounting of how we try to achieve each of these goals, the individual descriptions do not address how we often must make decisions in the course of individual studies in which some of the goals are conflicting. For example, the goal of promoting increased mobility for freight can often conflict with the goal of improving the quality of life. This was the case in the Bradley Area Transportation Study where increased freight movement can mean increased truck traffic in some residential neighborhoods. Likewise, the desire to correct a serious roadway safety problem can sometimes require a change in the roadway that can adversely affect adjoining property. While we cannot always achieve one goal without diminishing the other, we strive to reach a balance that accomplishes one without undue impact on the other(s).

1. Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency

Economic vitality is an important factor that influences much of CRCOG's transportation planning program. As illustrated in the paragraphs that follow, CRCOG has integrated economic development into its planning and programming activities at all levels including regionwide planning as reflected in the regional transportation plan, corridor planning as reflected in special studies, and in project selection and programming as reflected in the selection criteria for the STP-Urban program. Most recently, this emphasis has increased due to the creation of the State's Transportation Strategy Board. The Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) is a statewide entity that is charged with preparing a statewide transportation strategy that will assure the state's long-term economic growth. CRCOG anticipates working

closely with the state and neighboring regional planning agencies to help develop, refine, and implement this transportation strategy.

New Freight Planning Program. CRCOG is starting a new freight planning program in recognition of the need to maintain efficient goods movements in order to sustain economic growth in the Region. The new task is identified in CRCOG's UPWP for FY 2005, and it is expected that it will continue to be a separate work task in the future. The new task is being done in cooperation with the two other Hartford area MPOs (CCRPA and MRPA) as well as the Springfield area MPO (PVPC). Elements of the first year's work plan are provided under question 3 below.

Emphasis on Bradley International Airport. The economic vitality of the Hartford metropolitan area in the global marketplace is dependent to a large extent on the competitiveness of Bradley International Airport. The importance of the airport to the area's economy was highlighted in the 'Connecticut Strategic Economic Framework: Defining the Issues, Relationships and Resources Necessary to Compete in a Global Economy' that was prepared by Michael Gallis & Associates for the State of Connecticut. CRCOG's planning program reflects the importance of the airport both in the Regional Transportation Plan and in the Bradley Area Transportation Study.

Regional Transportation Plan. As part of the 2004 update of the Regional Transportation Plan, a whole new chapter was added to the Plan and it is devoted entirely to Bradley International Airport. The new chapter includes a detailed policy supportive of improving the airport, improving access to the airport, and undertaking other actions needed to fully realize the economic growth benefits that the Airport can generate. The goals and policies are based on work done for the Bradley Area Transportation Study, the Gallis Report, the Transportation Strategy Board, and the ongoing Airport Master Plan and Airport noise study.

Bradley Area Transportation Study. CRCOG adopted the Bradley Area Transportation Study in 2002. The final report for the study includes recommendations for improving ground access to the airport and the commercial areas around the airport. CRCOG is already working with other parties to implement some of the recommendations. These implementation efforts include:

- Airport Bus Service – CRCOG is working with the Greater Hartford Transit District, the Greater Hartford Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Hartford Economic Development Commission, and the MetroHartford Alliance to initiate a new premium bus service for air travelers that will provide faster direct service between the Airport and downtown Hartford.
- Bradley Park Road Extension – CRCOG is working with ConnDOT, the Town of East Granby, and the Air National Guard to initiate a project to extend Bradley Park Road, in order to better serve the west side cargo facilities and to improve security for the Air National Guard facility at the airport.

Transportation Strategy Board. The TSB was created in response to the Gallis Report, which is a special statewide study on the future of Connecticut's economy that emphasizes the importance of the transportation infrastructure in supporting economic growth. The TSB is charged with preparing a state transportation strategy that addresses the state's transportation needs in a manner that supports future economic growth. CRCOG has been an active participant in the development of that strategy along with other regional planning agencies and interested parties. Although the initial strategy is now complete, our work program for FY 2005 reflects the fact that we anticipate continuing to work with the TSB to refine and implement the strategy.

Jobs Access Program. At the regional level, CRCOG has been instrumental in the development of a Jobs Access program, which provides transportation to jobs for persons coming off welfare and other low-income people. This project has been underway for several years and has far surpassed the passenger goals set at the initiation of the project. This project helps to insure access to the economic benefits of the Region by all residents of the Region. In addition, Jobs Access enables businesses to access available entry-level workers helping the businesses to remain viable.

Project Selection & Programming. Economic development is one of the criteria CRCOG uses in the selection of projects for our STP-Urban program. If project sponsors can demonstrate that their proposed project will help encourage or sustain economic growth, the project can receive up to three additional points in our rating system. In our last selection process, there were several proposals selected that benefited from this criterion.

Corridor Studies: By their very nature, CRCOG's corridor studies promote economic vitality by ensuring that the corridor being studied can efficiently move traffic while supporting adjacent land uses. In each study, the needs of businesses in the corridor are given careful consideration.

2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users

Safety is a consideration in all of our planning activities. Investigation of safety problems is a standard work item in our corridor studies. Safety is also one of the criteria we use to select STP-Urban projects. In addition, our Incident Management Team deals primarily with safety issues, and safety is also a key issue in our regional bike and pedestrian planning efforts.

Corridor Studies. A standard work item in all of our corridor studies is the identification of hazardous locations and the development of proposals to correct the problems. Our emphasis on safety issues has actually increased recently, since safety improvements are one of the few types of roadway improvements that most of the participants in the studies (CRCOG, DOT, town officials, and the public) will support. As a result of this consensus, the safety projects developed during the corridor studies tend to become the highest priority projects recommended at the conclusion of the studies. This high priority status means they are more likely to be selected for funding. A key example of this is the decision to fund of a project on Route 44 over Avon Mountain. The project was a high priority improvement in the Route 44 corridor study because of the high frequency and severity of accidents at the curve near the top of Avon Mountain. Because of its high priority, CRCOG selected it for inclusion in its list of recommend projects, and ConnDOT agreed to fund it.

Project Selection & Programming. Safety is one of the criteria CRCOG uses in the selection of projects for our STP-Urban program. If project sponsors can demonstrate that their proposed project will help reduce accidents or improve safety, the project can receive up to ten additional points in our rating system. In our last selection process, there were several proposals selected that benefited from this criterion.

Regional Bicycle Planning. CROCOG completed and adopted a Regional Bicycle Plan in April of 2000 and since has been working to implement the programs and projects proposed in the plan. In the preparation of the Plan we learned that many potential cyclists were discouraged from bicycling because of the lack of safe facilities for bicyclists. In addition, we learned that both motorists and bicyclists were ill informed with regard to their responsibilities in sharing the road. Two programs instituted by CROCOG have sought to correct these problems. First, we ask bicyclists who attend out bike to work events to let us know of any hazardous conditions they encounter on their bicycle commute. These concerns are then forwarded to the appropriate agency for follow up (DOT or Town staff). Response has been extraordinary to simple maintenance items, facility related concerns are not as easily corrected. To aid the Towns in considering the need for safer bicycle facilities, we have worked with town staff to help them to explore the potential for bike lanes and other bicycle accommodations on their roads. The second program involves the distribution of a Share the Road brochure. FHWA assisted us in getting a second printing of our Share the Road brochure so that we could distribute it through all Department of Motor Vehicle offices in the state. We continue to explore ways that we can spread the share the road message more broadly.

Pedestrian Safety Study & Plan. CROCOG is currently completing a pedestrian safety study that will form the basis for a new regional pedestrian plan. The study will be completed and a new plan adopted by early 2005. In addition to this planning effort, we have worked to disseminate technical information regarding pedestrian safety to the region's towns. In the summer of 2003 we held eight (8) Walkability Workshops in the region. These workshops were sponsored by the National Center for Bicycling and Walking and we competed with region's around the country for the opportunity to host the workshops. At these workshops, participants (staff, elected officials, and the public) learned what features make a community safe and attractive for walking. In September of 2004 we held a Workshop/seminar on alternative pedestrian crossing treatments. This was a web based seminar offered through the American Society of Civil Engineers which we made available to all the towns in the region.

Incident Management Team. CROCOG staff works closely with emergency responders in the Region to promote projects that will facilitate the quick clearance of incidents on our highways. A key purpose of the quick clearance policy is to reduce secondary accidents that can occur as traffic backs up behind the initial accident site. An Incident Management Steering Committee, with representatives of local and State police, fire and EMS departments, State DOT and DEP, regional planning agencies and the FHWA, meets to further the goal of improving coordination, cooperation and communication among emergency responders.

Capitol Region Emergency Planning Committee. CROCOG's Emergency Planning Committee is responsible for preparing a regional plan for responding to major disasters and security threats. The transportation system is one of the functional areas they address in their planning process. The transportation system is both a resource for emergency responders to use during responses to disasters, and an asset to be secured and managed when it becomes the target of terrorist attacks or from other major incidents. CREPC has conducted training exercises involving both the CT Transit bus system and the region's freeway system. We are currently in the process of merging CROCOG's Incident Management Team with CREPC since the functions of both committees are so closely related.

3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight

CRCOG has worked hard to increase accessibility and mobility options for both people and freight. While our primary emphasis has been on increasing options for people with programs such as the Regional Transit Strategy, the Jobs Access Program, and the Regional Bike Plan, we have also addressed freight issues through our own studies as well as studies conducted by ConnDOT. Most recently, we have initiated a new freight planning program.

ACCESSIBILITY & MOBILITY OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE.

Enhanced Regional Transit System. CRCOG adopted a Regional Transit Strategy (RTS) study that recommended the provision of bus rapid transit facilities in four corridors extending out from Hartford, a commuter rail service connecting the cities of New Haven, Hartford and Springfield, MA, a circulator bus through downtown Hartford, and considerable improvements to the existing regional bus system. When these projects are complete, the Region will have significantly increased the accessibility and mobility options available to residents. CRCOG is now working with ConnDOT and other agencies to advance these recommendations. Progress includes: start of design work on the New Britain busway, completion of the Griffin Busway Feasibility Study, near completion of the Manchester Busway Feasibility Study, and near completion of the NHHS Commuter Rail Study.

Jobs Access Program. CRCOG's Jobs Access Program has increased the transportation options of low-income workers in the Region. We provide over 3000 trips per day for working residents who have no other means of transportation to work.

Regional Bike and Pedestrian Planning. CRCOG has recognized the importance of bicycling and walking as legitimate modes of transportation. Recent efforts in the implementation of CRCOG's Regional Bike Plan are intended to help make bicycle travel a viable mode of travel for more residents in the Region. In addition, our pedestrian planning efforts are directed at making walking a safe option for more residents. Our commitment to these two modes of travel is reflected in our adopted policy (adopted in 2001) which requires that all projects funded by CRCOG give consideration to the integration of biking and walking. This commitment is also reflected in our STP-Urban project selection criteria. Projects may receive up to 3 points for bike supportive elements and up to 3 points for pedestrian supportive elements.

Livable Communities & Smart Growth. For over five years, CRCOG has sought ways to promote 'livable communities' planning practices in the Region. Livable communities or smart growth practices encourage more compact, mixed-use type development patterns that give residents easier access to jobs, shopping, and other services they need. Thus, better land use planning can improve accessibility and reduce the need to travel. CRCOG's most important effort in this regard has been the TCSP funded project called 'Picture It Better Together.' This was a pilot project involving three communities (one urban, one suburban, and one rural) in an effort to identify ways that municipalities can promote smart growth. A Smart Growth policy was also included in the 2004 update to the Regional Transportation Plan. The key recommendation in the RTP regarding livable communities is provided below.

CRCOG will make every effort to support the goals of livable communities as appropriate. This will be done at all levels of the planning process from systems planning through project development and design. This will include, but not be limited to, adhering to context sensitive planning and design principles as discussed below under 'Context Sensitive Transportation Solutions.' Page 1-2 of RTP

In September of 2004, CRCOG released the first quarterly issue of a livable communities newsletter. Entitled "Building Livable Communities", it is dedicated to exploring transportation improvements as tools for livability. The newsletter was distributed to all municipalities in the region, including staff, elected officials, and town planning and zoning officials. This will be a useful tool in disseminating new ideas to the towns.

ACCESSIBILITY & MOBILITY OPTIONS FOR FREIGHT.

Historically, CRCOG has given consideration to freight issues as part of other elements of its planning program. For example, truck problems are considered as part of corridor studies and air cargo issues are considered as part of studies of Bradley Airport. However, CRCOG recently made the decision to start a new, more broadly based freight planning program. There is now a separate chapter on freight in the Regional Transportation Plan, and the first year of the new freight planning program is just getting under way. Provided below is a brief description of the new freight planning program, as well as description of other significant accomplishments completed as part of other aspects of CRCOG's planning program.

New Freight Planning Program. CRCOG is starting a new freight planning program in recognition of the need to maintain efficient goods movement in order to sustain economic growth in the Region. The new task is identified in CRCOG's UPWP for FY 2005, and it is expected that it will continue to be a separate work task in the future. The new task is being done in cooperation with the two other Hartford area MPOs (CCRPA and MRPA) as well as the Springfield area MPO (PVPC). Elements of the first year's work plan are provided below.

1. Develop a profile of the freight transport system in the Hartford metropolitan area
2. Establish interagency MPO working group (CRCOG, CCRPA, MRPA, PVPC, DOT) to coordinate efforts
3. Establish freight planning advisory committee including private sector representatives
4. Consultant conducts a 2-hour work session on basics of freight planning.
5. Consultant conducts a 2-hour work session on regional freight flows & opportunities using PVPC data.
6. Through advisory committee discussions, identify important regional freight issues.
7. Evaluate issues to establish priorities for next year's work program.
8. Establish work program for year 2. Approve work program through working group & advisory committee.

Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan contains a separate chapter on freight transport issues in the region. Since it is a new emphasis area for CRCOG, most of the issues reviewed in the chapter are general in nature. The exceptions are issues that were identified and evaluated as part of other studies such as the Bradley Area Transportation Study. However, the chapter does serve to highlight key issues and establish that freight will become an emphasis area for CRCOG.

Freight Considerations in the Bradley Study. The Bradley Area Transportation included a review of problems with truck movements in the area of Bradley Airport. It is important to maintain good truck access to the Airport in order to support Bradley's growing air freight business. The study examined ways to maintain good access for trucks, while at the same time addressing the concerns of certain residential neighborhoods where increasing truck traffic was cited as a problem. Special efforts undertaken to gain input from the freight industry included (1) inviting the CT Motor Transport Association to participate as a member of the BATS Steering Committee, (2) inviting representatives of air freight companies to

participate in the Windsor Locks Advisory Committee,¹ and (3) holding a special focus group meeting for freight industry representatives. The latter was held to help identify issues and problems that trucking firms and related businesses felt needed to be addressed.

Truck Considerations in the TCSP & Westside Access Studies. One of the problems identified in both CRCOG's TCSP project and ConnDOT's Westside Access Study (CRCOG is a key participant in the Westside Access Study) is truck movements through Hartford neighborhoods. The neighborhood where truck movement was of greatest concern was Parkville, which is a mixed residential and commercial area. Truck traffic in Parkville is also affected by a bridge that does not have sufficient vertical clearance to accommodate large trucks. Many of the alternates developed and analyzed during the Westside Access Study were designed to make truck movements for businesses more efficient, and to reduce the volume of truck traffic through the neighborhood.

Intermodal Management System. An Intermodal Management System was developed and implemented by the Connecticut DOT. The system helps identify and monitor goods movement needs in the State of Connecticut. CRCOG staff served on the advisory committee and had input into the final report. The report recognized both Hartford and Bradley International Airport as major intermodal hubs.

Commercial Vehicle Operations Plan. ConnDOT also prepared (with cooperation from CRCOG staff) a Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) institutional issues study. This study was part of the larger effort to develop and implement ITS systems in the State and the Region. It targeted many permitting and licensing problems that affect trucking firms in the State of Connecticut and in the northeastern United States as well.

Commercial Vehicle Information Systems and Networks Project. CVISN is a special project initiated by ConnDOT to help implement the recommendations contained in the CVO study (which CRCOG participated in). Through this project, ConnDOT and affiliated agencies such as the State Police, Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Department of Revenue Services, are deploying the communications and computer technology necessary to streamline the various permitting, licensing, registration, fee collection, and inspection functions that affect trucking firms in Connecticut.

Corridor Studies. An important element considered in each CRCOG Corridor Study has been the need to insure adequate movement of goods through the corridor and within the corridor.

4. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life

CRCOG's transportation plans and programs work to protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life in the Region. The three goals are supported in numerous ways through CRCOG programs. At the planning and policy level, they are reflected in statements of goals and objectives, regional policies and plans, and corridor specific plans. More importantly, they are also supported at the project selection and programming stage of our process. CRCOG actively seeks to implement the plans and policies it adopts by working with state and federal agencies to find funding for

¹ In addition to the study Steering Committee, we formed local advisory committees in each of the four towns in the study area.

environmentally beneficial projects as recommended in our transit plan, our bike plan, and our corridor plans. We also incorporate these goals into our project selection criteria for the STP-Urban program.

Transit Initiatives Support Air Quality & Energy Conservation Goals. CRCOG has undertaken numerous transit initiatives in the last five years that will help improve air quality and reduce fuel consumption. Most significant is the adoption of the Regional Transit Strategy (RTS) that outlines a plan for improving the existing bus system and introducing a rapid transit system to the Region.

CRCOG is already working to help implement RTS recommendations. CRCOG was a key participant in the New Britain Busway EIS conducted by ConnDOT, and continues to be a key participant in the design phase. We have been a proponent of the use of alternate fuel buses on the busway, and have even investigated the potential use of a small number of fuel cell power buses to test the feasibility of this innovative technology. Along with ConnDOT, we have completed or nearly completed feasibility studies for two additional busways – the Manchester Busway and the Griffin Busway. We also worked with ConnDOT to conduct the feasibility study for the proposed New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail service. If these proposals get implemented, the Region will have a very viable alternative to automobile travel for many residents in the Region that will reduce air pollution and conserve fuel.

CRCOG continues to work with CT Transit, the Rideshare Company, and ConnDOT to improve our existing bus services and rideshare services.

- *TIP Support.* We continue to fund regular transit and rideshare activities through our TIP process.
- *Bus Stop Program.* We completed a special study of bus stops and developed recommendations for a regional bus stop improvement program that included better bus stop signing, shelters for important stops, and a regional policy for maintenance of bus stops. We are currently working with ConnDOT to implement many of the recommendations.
- *Jobs Access.* The Jobs Access program plays an important role in improving the quality of life of those who are transitioning off welfare and need transportation to their place of employment.
- *HOV Park & Ride Lot Study.* We also conducted a study of needed improvements at park and ride lots located near HOV lanes.
- *Corridor Studies.* Transit and rideshare needs are also considered in all our corridor studies. The studies contain numerous recommendations for improvements to park and ride lots, bus stops, and in some cases improvements to service. Some of the recommended improvements have been, or are being implemented. Three of these are listed below.
 - *Unionville Bus Service.* The E-Route to Unionville was extended to Tunxis Community College.
 - *Starkel Road Bus Stop.* A project to relocate and improve the Starkel Road bus stop in West Hartford was funded and is now completed.
 - *Canton Commuter Lot.* A new commuter lot was included in a ConnDOT highway improvement project at the intersection of Route 44 and Route 179 in Canton.

Regional Bike and Pedestrian Planning Program Supports All Three Goals. Greater use of non motorized modes can have an impact upon air quality, energy consumption, and general

quality of life. CRCOG's commitment to biking and walking is evidenced in the fact that our Unified Planning Work Program now lists bike and pedestrian planning as a separate activity. We have aggressively worked to encourage greater use of bicycles for regular transportation through our bike to work promotions and have encouraged the development of more walkable communities through our workshops and seminars. Just as the proposed programs and projects contained in CRCOG's Bike Plan will do much to protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve the quality of life in the Region, we expect that the Pedestrian Plan, to be adopted next year, will do likewise. The activities listed below illustrate some of the ways in which our bike and pedestrian programs will contribute to the goals of improving the environment, conserving energy, and improving the quality of life.

- *Bike to Work Promotions.* For seven months of the year, CRCOG joins with the CT Bicycle Coalition, CT DOT, CT DEP, and other groups to actively encourage more people to bike to work. CRCOG organizes bike to work events on the last Friday of the month. We work with our partners to generate interest through press coverage, internal communications at major employers, and advertising. Concurrently, we are undertaking efforts to educate drivers that they need to 'share the road' with cyclists. We hope to create a culture in which drivers, employers, and the community in general are more supportive of bike travel on public roads. While bikes may never be used by a large percentage of commuters, if we can encourage even a small percentage to use their bikes, we can help save energy and reduce vehicle exhaust emissions.
- *Bike Trails.* CRCOG has long been supportive of the construction of bike paths or multi-use trails. Since the passage of ISTEA and creation of the STP-Enhancement program, we have funded numerous bike trail projects and have constructed many miles of trails. We are still actively pursuing the construction of more miles of trail. While most of CRCOG's STP-Enhancement funds have been programmed for bike trails, we have programmed a small amount of STP-Urban funds, as well, and we are working with other partners to access other funding sources such as High Priority Project funding and special state funds. In addition, CRCOG staff has been working with the Resource Conservation and Development district (RC&D) to implement a trail along the South Branch of the Park River in Hartford.

These bike trail projects are considered a high priority because they help to improve the quality of life in the community they serve. Most of our trails are very heavily used during the warm months, and are strongly supported by the communities. As the trail system is expanded, it will be able to serve as a part of a bike commuting system, serving far more daily trips.

- *Other Bike Facilities.* CRCOG has been willing to serve as a resource to municipalities considering how they can improve bike safety in their communities. We have disseminated reports and field questions from the Towns regarding bike facilities. The City of Hartford created bike lanes on several roads after consulting with CRCOG.

Livable Communities Goal. As discussed under Factor 3 above, CRCOG adopted a 'livable communities' goal as part of its Regional Transportation Plan. CRCOG is committed to conducting its transportation planning program in a manner that supports communities as desirable places to live and work. We have a history of doing so through projects such as the 'Picture It Better Together' project, the Station Area Planning Project, the Regional Bicycle Plan, the 'walkable communities' workshops, the New Britain Busway project, and the new livable communities newsletter.

Corridor Studies Stress Neighborhood Quality of Life. Quality of life is an important consideration in the corridor studies that CRCOG conducts. In our first set of studies, we learned that to gain public acceptance of transportation improvements we had to develop alternatives that addressed transportation objectives in a manner that did not significantly diminish the quality of life for adjacent neighborhoods. In many cases that meant we had to accept a solution that did not fully achieve all of our transportation objectives, but did correct the most serious deficiencies while not adversely affecting the neighborhood.

We have incorporated some of the lessons learned into our newest studies. We now start our studies with the knowledge that we need to take a holistic approach to problem solving and consider all important community issues as we assess conditions in a travel corridor. For example, in the BATS study mentioned above and the Route 190 Corridor Study in Enfield and Somers, we have recognized the need to preserve neighborhoods and villages within the study areas. Landscape architects were retained for both studies and they suggested ways to help preserve or restore villages through context sensitive designs that not only minimize impacts from roadway improvements, but also support and enhance important community resources, activities, and goals.

Project Selection: STP-Urban Program. Beyond the planning process, CRCOG has tried to support the goals of environmental enhancement, energy conservation, and quality of life in its project selection and programming process. In our STP-Urban program, we have included project selection criteria that support these goals. We award up to three points for projects that can achieve an environmental improvement. More recently, we recognized the growing importance of the quality of life issue and added another criterion for traffic calming. Projects that include design elements that help calm traffic in residential areas, or neighborhood centers can receive up to three points. Projects that include bike features can receive up to three points and projects that include pedestrian features can receive up to three points. In our last selection process, projects received extra points for a wide diversity of environmental and quality of life benefits. These included separation of sanitary and storm sewers (sanitary sewers will remain intact, but the project will include construction of new storm sewers), sedimentation controls in environmentally sensitive areas, elimination of hydraulic restrictions, and traffic calming.

System Management Supports Energy Conservation. See Factor 6 below.

5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight

CRCOG has made a deliberate effort to take a more comprehensive and intermodal approach to planning. In the last five years, we have expanded the variety of modal issues we consider to include bicycle travel, freight movement, and airport access. We have undertaken a comprehensive regional transit strategy that for the first time looked at major new transit alternatives from a systemwide or regional perspective, rather than as an option in a single corridor. This allowed us to examine how the transit options in different corridors might be integrated into a unified system. Finally, in each of our individual corridor studies, we try to assess the needs of all modes of travel, not just automobile travel.

Regional Transit Strategy. As discussed above, the RTS allowed us to conduct a comprehensive review of the needs of our regional transit system, rather than considering the need for a transit improvement in the limited context of a single corridor study. We feel both approaches are needed, and that the regional study approach offered us the opportunity to

examine how all the individual corridor improvements might be integrated into a unified system.

Freight Planning Program. CRCOG started a new freight planning program to give additional emphasis to freight issues in the area.

Bradley Area Transportation Study. The Bradley Area Transportation Study is a corridor study that was undertaken specifically for the purpose of trying to provide good ground access to an airport facility. Furthermore, we want to assure good ground access both for automobile traffic, and for freight operators who need to service the growing air freight business at Bradley International Airport. The study also considered transit access to the Airport, but deferred to recommendations being developed in the Regional Transit Strategy.

Bike Plan. As with the RTS, the Regional Bike Plan provided an opportunity to examine how to integrate individual bike facilities into a regional system. Although we had funded numerous individual bike trails in the Region, we had never made a concerted effort to see how they should all be connected. We also studied the need for bike supportive amenities like bike racks at important modal and activity centers.

Integration of Transit Elements in Highway Projects. CRCOG frequently explores ways of including transit facilities such as bus stops and park-and-ride lots in its various transportation studies and projects. Most of our corridor studies include recommendations for new park-and-ride lots in the travel corridor, and bus stop improvements for those sections of the corridor served by local buses.

Integration of Bike Facilities into Transit & Highway Projects. CRCOG has promoted the integration of bike facilities into various transit and highway projects. We have argued for the inclusion of a bike trail in the New Britain Busway right-of-way, and we have argued for the inclusion of bike racks at the busway stations and on the buses themselves. We have even approved STP-Urban funds to construct a bike/walk access trail at the Elmwood station. The trail will make it easier for people to walk and bike to the station. And, in fact, our current policy requires that all projects that receive funding through CRCOG must show that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations were considered in the design phase.

6. Promote efficient system management and operation

Since 1993 when CRCOG adopted its System Management Policy, we have consistently supported projects that help improve the efficiency of our existing facilities, thus promoting energy conservation and reducing the need to build new facilities. We have supported through planning activities and funding the installation and improvement of traffic signal coordination projects, which are a proven method of both reducing fuel consumption and exhaust emissions. We also developed an ITS Plan that outlines a strategy for enhancing the efficiency of our freeway, arterial, and transit systems through the use of special technology. Most of those recommendations have now been implemented, but we continue to work toward implementation of the remaining proposals.

System Management Policy. A *system management policy* was prepared in 1993 and has guided the development of subsequent regional transportation plans, and various CRCOG programs and policies. As a result of the policy, we have implemented many programs and projects that place a strong emphasis on making more efficient use of the existing facilities.

- *Congestion Management System.* CRCOG is initiating a brand new congestion management system that will include a much more extensive and up-to-date reporting

system on congestion in the region. With the new data, we will be able to more closely monitor congestion trends and respond appropriately.

- *Access Management Program.* The original system management policy recommended that CRCOG implement an access management policy. We have done so and access management plans are now routinely done as part of every corridor study we conduct. We have also encouraged many towns to adopt more effective access management practices through newsletters, workshops, and special studies.
- *ITS Plan.* As a result of the system management policy, CRCOG and ConnDOT prepared a regional Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan. The Plan was completed in 1997 and many of its recommendations have been implemented.
- *Project Selection and Programming.* CRCOG has consistently given funding priority to projects that increase system efficiency such as coordinated traffic control systems and commuter parking lot improvements. CRCOG also completed a project proposal for improvements at park and ride lots, which will promote the usage of HOV lanes in the Region. This proposal has been funded, and implementation is underway.
- *Incident Management Team.* CRCOG works with an Incident Management Steering Committee to promote projects, which will assist in the quick clearance of incidents on our highways.
- *Transit System Management.* CRCOG formed a bus subcommittee that worked to develop a regional policy for bus stop sites, signs and shelters and is now working with CT Transit to install standardized bus stop signs throughout the Region and with individual towns to install bus shelters where warranted. In addition, the Jobs Access program seeks to match eligible commuters with the most efficient means of transportation to their job site.
- *Corridor Studies – Integration of System Management.* CRCOG has undertaken eight corridor studies. These studies were structured specifically to develop and evaluate system management options as one of the primary alternatives to be considered during the study. This requirement gives priority to system management type options, as required under our Congestion Management System.

7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

Preservation or maintenance of the existing transportation system is primarily the responsibility of the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the individual municipalities. ConnDOT is responsible for the maintenance of all state-owned transportation facilities, while each municipality is responsible for maintaining its own roads. CRCOG's role is limited to supporting the maintenance activity of the state and towns through our funding authority and approval of TIP amendments.

Regional Transportation Plan. CRCOG's transportation plan does not address specific maintenance needs. However, it does reflect the State priority on maintenance. The Plan's budget for new capital projects is constrained to fit within the financial guidelines for new capital projects set by the State. The guidelines are based on the State goal of meeting its maintenance needs before funding any new capital projects.

Maintaining the existing transportation system is the second most important goal in the State Transportation Plan (safety is #1). ConnDOT estimates that 60 percent of all its funds will be

needed to maintain the existing system. This estimate is reflected in our Regional Transportation Plan, and is used to establish our financial constraint limit.

TIP and Financial Support for Maintenance. CRCOG supports part of the State maintenance program through the funding approval (TIP) process in programs such as Interstate Maintenance, bridge rehabilitation, and bus replacement. However, much of the State maintenance program is funded strictly through State funds.

Support for Municipal Maintenance Needs. CRCOG provides limited support to municipal maintenance efforts through the STP-Urban program and our 'cooperative purchasing' program.

- *Project Selection: STP-Urban Program.* While direct financial support of local maintenance programs is limited, CRCOG does consider the need for structural improvements on local roads in its STP-Urban program. The selection criteria includes 'structural improvement needs.' A proposed project can reach up to 10 extra points for a project that corrects a structural deficiency in road or bridge. CRCOG changed its STP-Urban funding policy to place more emphasis on local road and bridge reconstruction projects.

Cooperative Purchasing Program. CRCOG provides indirect financial assistance to municipal maintenance programs through our cooperative purchasing program. The Council administers cooperative bids on items such as snowplow blades, sand, and diesel fuel. These